

**Amendments to the Claims:**

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Previously Presented) The system as set forth in claim 10, wherein cantilevering of the subject pallet is constant in all longitudinal positions of the subject and intermediate pallets to prevent deflection changes while extending into the first and second scanner subject receiving bores.

3. (Previously Presented) The system as set forth in claim 5, wherein the intermediate support is disposed between the first and second modalities for supporting the tip of the intermediate pallet in the extended position such that the intermediate pallet is supported against deflecting as the subject pallet moves along the intermediate pallet into the second modality.

4. (Previously Presented) The system as set forth in claim 10, wherein the base includes a main support pallet including a static support member which supports the tip of the intermediate pallet while the subject pallet extends into the first scanner subject receiving bore during imaging.

5. (Previously Presented) A telescopic table system for imaging a subject in at least a first modality and a second modality, the table comprising:

a base;

an intermediate pallet having a tip and a trailing edge mounted to the base for longitudinal movement between at least a retracted position and an extended position with the tip extending outward from the base;

a subject pallet having a leading edge and a trailing edge; and

bearing supports mounted adjacent the subject pallet trailing edge such that the subject pallet is cantilevered therefrom, the bearing supports being mounted to the intermediate pallet for longitudinal movement therealong;

a catcher support member which is disposed on a top surface of an intermediate support; and

a lift mechanism which raises the intermediate support until the catcher support member comes into contact with an intermediate pallet lower surface to support the intermediate pallet tip.

6. (Previously Presented) The system as set forth in claim 5, wherein a leading edge of the intermediate pallet is cantilevered a common distance past the catcher support member when the subject pallet extends into the second modality as past the static support member when the subject pallet extends into the first modality.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Previously Presented) The table as set forth in claim 10, wherein the subject pallet is manufactured from a stiffened carbon fiber to limit deflection of the subject pallet.

10. (Previously Presented) A diagnostic imaging system comprising:

- a first diagnostic scanner of a first modality, the first diagnostic scanner having a subject receiving bore;

- a second diagnostic scanner of a second modality, having a subject receiving bore, the second diagnostic scanner being disposed adjacent the first diagnostic scanner with the second scanner subject receiving bore being aligned with the first scanner subject receiving bore;

- an intermediate support disposed between the first and second diagnostic scanners;

- a telescoping table system including:

  - a base disposed adjacent the first diagnostic scanner,

  - an intermediate pallet having a tip and a trailing edge mounted to the base for longitudinal movement between at least a

retracted position and an extended position with the tip extending outward from the base, through the first scanner subject receiving bore to engage the intermediate support adjacent the tip,

a subject pallet having a leading edge and trailing edge mounted to the intermediate pallet for movement therealong between a retracted position and a cantilevered position, and

a drive mechanism for (a) moving the subject pallet through the first scanner subject receiving bore and (b) extending the intermediate pallet through the first scanner subject receiving bore to the intermediate support and moving the subject pallet along the intermediate pallet through the second scanner subject receiving bore.

11-14. (Cancelled)

15. (Previously Presented) A method of subject handling using a telescopic table system in which an intermediate pallet is movably mounted to a base for longitudinal movement therealong between at least a retracted position and an extended position; and a subject pallet having a leading edge and a trailing edge is movably mounted on the intermediate pallet for longitudinal movement therealong, the method comprising:

loading a subject on the subject pallet while the subject pallet is being supported by the intermediate pallet in the retracted position, and while the intermediate pallet is supported by a static main support member;

while continuing to support the intermediate pallet on the main support member, moving the subject support pallet along the intermediate pallet into a first modality scanner for imaging;

withdrawing the subject support pallet from the first modality scanner to align with the intermediate pallet;

extending the aligned intermediate and subject pallets simultaneously through the first modality scanner to an intermediate support, which includes a catcher support member disposed on a top surface of the intermediate support;

raising a lift mechanism of the intermediate support until the catcher support member comes into contact with an intermediate pallet lower surface to support the intermediate pallet; and

while supporting the intermediate pallet with the catcher support member, moving the subject pallet along the intermediate pallet through a second modality scanner for imaging.

16. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 15, wherein a leading edge of the intermediate pallet is cantilevered a common distance past the catcher support member when the subject pallet extends into the second modality scanner as past the static support member when the subject pallet extends into the first modality scanner.

17. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 15, further including:

retracting the subject pallet, which is loaded with the subject, from the second modality scanner into the retracted position in an emergency, including the steps of:

- (a) locking the intermediate pallet against moving;
- (b) retracting the subject pallet from the second modality scanner;
- (c) locking the subject pallet into a retracted position in which the subject and intermediate pallets are substantially aligned;
- (d) unlocking the intermediate pallet; and
- (e) moving the locked and aligned subject and intermediate pallets through the first modality scanner into the retracted position.

18. (Currently Amended) A medical imaging system comprising:

- a first imaging system;
- a second imaging system;
- a catcher disposed between the first and second imaging systems; and

a common patient support table, wherein the patient support table is movable between a first position where an object to be imaged is within an imaging region of the first imaging system and a second position where the table is supported on the catcher and the object is positioned within an imaging region of the second imaging system;

wherein said common patient support table is cantilevered in both the first position and the second position such that an axial deflection of the patient support table in the first position is the same as an axial deflection of the patient support table in the second position;

wherein the patient support table includes a main support pallet, an intermediate support pallet and a patient support pallet and the intermediate support pallet and the patient support pallet extend from the main support pallet when the patient support table is in the first position, and wherein the patient support pallet extends from the intermediate support pallet and the intermediate support pallet is supported on the catcher when the patient support table is in the second position.

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Currently Amended) The medical system of claim [[20]] 18, wherein one or more support members are positioned between the patient support pallet and the intermediate pallet such that when the patient support pallet extends from the intermediate pallet, the patient support pallet is cantilevered on the intermediate pallet.

22. (Previously Presented) The system as set forth in claim 10, further including:

a lift mechanism that lifts the intermediate support into contact with a lower surface of the intermediate pallet to support the intermediate pallet adjacent the tip when the subject pallet is extended into the subject receiving bore of the second scanner.

23. (Previously Presented) The medical system of claim 18 further including:

a lift mechanism that raises and lowers the catcher.

24. (Previously Presented) The medical system of claim 18, wherein said common patient support table is cantilevered in both the first position and the second position such that an axial deflection of the patient support table in the first position is the same as an axial deflection of the patient support table in the second position.